Afghanistan. Both India and Afghanistan have taken up the issue of transit through Pakistan for goods/materials, including under India's assistance programmes, to Afghanistan.

Indo-Russian Nuclear Agreements

2523. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Russia is working on the possibility of including India as a non-voting member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in a bid to clear the supply of four nuclear reactors, which has been held up because of international objection;

(b) if so, whether both India and Russia are working hard to clear the way for better understanding in the defence, nuclear and oil sectors;

(c) if so, whether Russian President's visit to India during 2005, he is expected to sign 14 agreements;

(d) if so, whether both countries have worked to clear these agreements; and

(e) if so, the details of the same and to what extent India would be fully sufficient in defence needs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) An Agreement between India and the former USSR on cooperation in the construction of a Nuclear Power Station in India consisting of two light water reactors of 1000 MW each was signed on November 20, 1988. A Supplement to this Agreement was concluded in 1998 between India and Russia. Work on the construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project is progressing on schedule. Russia is a member of the ad hoc Nuclear Suppliers Group. In our bilateral dialogue with Russia, an area of focus for expanding cooperation has been the energy sector, including thermal, hydel and nuclear energy for power production. India's cooperation with Russia today in the defence field and oil sector is mutually beneficial.

(c) The President of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin had visited India on 3-5 December, 2004 for the India-Russia Annual Summit.

The next annual summit is scheduled to be held in Moscow in 2005.

(d) Not applicable.

(e) Not applicable.

British Foreign Policy towards PoK

2524. SHRI R. K. ANAND:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Britain has appointed an honorary Consul at Mirpur in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir;

(b) if so, whether it is an indication of change in British foreign policy towards PoK;

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) British High Commission has clarified that the Honorary Consul was appointed only to provide consular service to the large Mirpuri community in the UK and stated that this step did not have any bearing on the issue of recognition or political issues involved.

(c) Government has, through the British High Commission in New Delhi, conveyed its objection to the decision as the concerned action is related to an Indian territory presently under illegal occupation of Pakistan.

Indo-Afghan Co-operation

2525. SHRI LALIT SURI:
SHRI R.S. GAVAI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Afghan President recently visited New Delhi and had discussions with Indian Prime Minister;

(b) if so, the nature of talks held between the representatives of two countries; and